

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /048 W

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R 211215Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3090

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 2277

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, CE

SUBJ: COLOMBO SOUTH BY-ELECTION

REF: COLOMBO 1960

1. JULY 18 COLOMBO SOUTH BY-ELECTION WAS WON EASILY BY UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) LEADER J.R. JAYEWARDENE. JAYEWARDENE THUS REGAINED NATIONAL SATE ASSEMBLY (NSA) SEAT HE VACATED MAY 14 TO PROTEST NSA EXTENSION BEYOND FIVE-YEAR LIMIT IN FORCE AT TIME OF 170 GENERAL ELECTIONS. JAYEWARDENE POLLED 36,919 (74 PERCENT) OF 50,264 VOTES CAST, WINN NG WITH 25,801 MAJORITY OVER J.R.P. SURIYAPPERUMA, FORMER UNP MEMBER WHO RAN AS INDPENDENT AFTER HIS RECENT OUSTER FROM UNP. SEVEN OTHER INDPENDENT CANDIDATES LOST DEPOSITS. APPROX 69 PERCENT OF VOTERS TURNED OUT COMPARED WITH ABOUT 72 PERCENT IN 1970 GENERAL ELECTION.

2. COMMENT: UNITED FRONT DECISION TO STAND ASIDE DENIED JAYEWARDENE CHANCE FOR DIRECT ENCOUNTER ON ELECTION ISSUE AND EXPOSED UNP TO POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT WHEN EX-UNPER ENTERED RACE. BEST GUESS IS THAT SRI LANKA FREEDOM
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PARTY (SLFP) VOTERS SUPPORTED JAYEWARDENE,

TROTSKYITE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP)
STALWARTS SUPPORTED SURIYAPPERUMA OR STAYED
HOME, AND UNP MEMBERS SUPPORTED JAYEWARDENE
EVEN MORE HEART IY
THAN IN 1970, WHEN HE CAPTURED
60 PERCENT OF VOTES CAST IN RACE AGAINST LSSP'S BERNARD SOYSA
IN TWO-SEAT CONSTITUENCY. ELECTION SHOULD STRENGTHEN
JAYEWARDENE'S POSITION AS UNP LEADER AND SHOWS VOTERS DID NOT
DISPUTE J.R.'S CLAIM THAT UF MORALLY OBLIGATED TO
SEEK ELECTION NOW. IN ABSENCE OF UF CANDIDATE,
ELECTION RESULTS DO NOT PERMIT ESTIMATE OF RELATIVE
STRENGTH OF UNP AND UF IN COLOMBO SOUTH.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: woolflhd
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COLOMB02277
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750251-0279
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750734/aaaabewj.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 COLOMBO 1960
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: woolflhd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <05 DEC 2003 by woolflhd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COLOMBO SOUTH BY-ELECTION
TAGS: PINR, CE, (JAYEWARDENE, J R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006